



P.O. Box 1000, Beverly Hills, Ca. 90213

## GARY KURTZ: The Working Producer

Born in Los Angeles in July of 1940, Gary Kurtz grew up in both the Los Angeles and San Francisco areas. His father made many 8mm films when he was young, and Gary discovered these when he was around 10 years old.

The films fascinated him, and he spent a good deal of time viewing and editing these films. As he grew, he became interested in still photography, and for this hobby, he built miniature versions of buildings and other scenes. He also used those miniature sets for the 8mm films he did make.

In school, he became interested in music, performing with his school's band, as well as other local bands. Gary took his interest in photography and 8mm filmmaking, and combined them with his interest in music to make short films of the band practicing and performing.

His interest in filmmaking expanded over the years, and he went on to study at the University of Southern California Film School. While there, and after leaving USC, he wrote, directed, photographed, and edited many industrial and educational films.

At the same time, he worked on many feature films. Gary Kurtz was among the group of talented young filmmakers that have been encouraged and taught by working with producer-director Roger Corman. Gary worked on many of Corman's low-budget action and horror films, gaining experience in almost every capacity of filmmaking.

Following two years of service in the Marines as a cameraman, editor, and still photographer, Gary returned to USC for additional courses. After editing several low-budget features, he became associate producer on Monte Hellman's *Two Lane Blacktop*.

While working with Roger Corman, Gary met Francis Ford Coppola, who later went on to make *The Godfather*, while they were both working on making the film, *The Terror*, starring Boris Karloff and Jack Nicholson. During a visit to Coppola's studio in San Francisco, Gary met George Lucas, who was there filming his first feature film, *THX 1138*.

George Lucas had shot *THX 1138* in a process called

Technoscope, and Gary wanted to use that same process to shoot *Two Lane Blacktop*. During his visit to Coppola's American Zoetrope studio, Gary spent a good deal of time talking to George Lucas about Technoscope, filmmaking, and they got to know each other.

Later, George Lucas approached Gary with his idea for *American Graffiti*. Ultimately, Gary and Francis Coppola co-produced the film with George Lucas directing from a screenplay co-authored by Lucas, Gloria Katz, and Willard Huyck. The film was nominated for five Academy Awards, won the Golden Globe Award for Best Motion Picture (Comedy), and walked away with both the New York Film Critics and the National Society of Film Critics Awards for Best Screenplay. It is also one of the most successful films of all time.

Having worked as a lab technician, electrician, writer, cameraman, director, editor, sound mixer, assistant director, still photographer, production manager, and producer, Gary Kurtz had the knowledge to coordinate the technical, logistical, and artistic needs of a film of epic proportions such as *Star Wars*. He also had the knowledge needed to make feasible, on a small budget and a limited shooting schedule, a movie with a great deal of action, many characters, and constant changes of location, such as *American Graffiti*.

Gary is currently hard at work as producer of the sequel to *Star Wars*, for which he will need every bit as much expertise as was needed for the original. For the first film, as well as this one, he hired the crew, planned out the logistics of the film, set up casting sessions for George Lucas, and made sure that all of the elements needed to make the film were there. He worked with the studio on various aspects of the production, and worked on details of the script with George Lucas, figuring out what could be done and what could not within the budget and technical expertise available to them.

There are two types of motion picture producers. One is the entrepreneur who makes deals over lunch. The second kind of producer is one who loves movies, and who worked his way up through the industry, to learn every facet of filmmaking. The kind who uses his resultant expertise to help the director, writers, and actors achieve

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their artistic goals. One of the best examples of this second type of producer is Gary Kurtz.



## Star Wars Sequel

On August 4th, it was officially announced that the title of the sequel to *Star Wars* will be *The Empire Strikes Back*.

The second film will be a continuation of the first film, with more emphasis placed on the characters and their development. Along with the increased emphasis on the characters, *The Empire Strikes Back* will include a resolving of the romantic rivalry between Luke Skywalker and Han Solo for Princess Leia.

Preparations have already begun in the Art Department and Special Effects Department. Special effects photography will begin in October of 1978, with principle photography beginning in February of 1979. The film is tentatively scheduled for release in the Spring of 1980.

Returning for the sequel will be Luke Skywalker, Princess Leia Organa, Han Solo, R2-D2, C-3PO, Chewbacca, and Darth Vader. Additionally, there will be some new human and alien characters introduced.

George Lucas will be acting as Executive Producer on *The Empire Strikes Back*, with Gary Kurtz returning as Producer.

Irvin Kershner will be Director. His previous credits include *The Eyes of Laura Mars*, *The Return of A Man Called Horse*, *Loving, A Fine Madness*, *The Flim Flam Man*, and a television movie, *Raid on Entebbe*.

Stuart Freeborn will be returning as Makeup Supervisor, and John Williams will be returning to do the music. Norman Reynolds, Art Director on *Star Wars*, will be Production Designer for the sequel.

Taking over as Special Effects Supervisor will be Brian Johnson. His previous credits include *2001: A Space Odyssey* (working with Doug Trumbull), *The Day The Earth Caught Fire*, *The Return of the Pink Panther*, *Alien* (currently in production), and the television series *Space 1999*.

## Name the Newsletter Contest Winners

In issue 2 of the newsletter, we announced the first in a series of contests to be held by the Official *Star Wars* Fan

Club. The purpose of this contest was to come up with a title for the official newsletter of the club, which, up until this point, was simply called "the newsletter".

Any member of the club was eligible to enter, and literally thousands did. It was not easy deciding which title to choose and who the winner would be. The thousands of entries received were narrowed down to nine finalists, with the judges voting to determine the winners. The judging and voting were done by representatives of *Star Wars* Corporation, including George Lucas and Gary Kurtz. In the case of duplicate suggestions, the one with the earliest postmark was used to determine the winner.

The new title for the newsletter of the Official *Star Wars* Fan Club is: *Bantha Tracks*.

The title was suggested by Preston Postle of Avon, Ohio, who is our first place winner. He will receive an R2-D2 Cookie Jar from Roman Ceramics and a set of 3 *Star Wars* Drinking Mugs (Darth Vader, Chewbacca, and Obi-Wan Kenobi) from the Mind Circus.

Second Place goes to Robbie Richardson of British Columbia, Canada, for his suggestion of *The Comlink*. He'll be receiving a set of the 3 *Star Wars* Drinking Mugs.

Third Place, and an R2-D2 Cookie Jar, goes to Robert Truax of Memphis, Tennessee, for his suggestion of *Inside Star Wars*.

Honorable Mentions go to the following finalists: Billy Covell of Rockville Center, New York; David Schwadron of East Windsor, New Jersey; Mike Demouly of St. Petersburg, Florida; Linda Mullaney of Lynchhurst, New Jersey; and Rodney Wayne Kindlund of Selma, California.

Keep reading the newsletter for information on future contests, including one with a Grand Prize of a trip to London and a visit to the set of the sequel to *Star Wars*.

## Star Wars around the world

# LA GUERRE DES ETOILES

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*Star Wars* is already playing in many countries around the world. And in all of those countries, *Star Wars* is a tremendous success.

But, in many of those countries, *Star Wars* is not called *Star Wars*. Here's a list of what some countries call *Star Wars*.

Swedish  
Norwegian  
Finnish  
Danish  
German  
Spanish  
Brazilian  
Italian  
French

Stjarnornas  
Stjerne Krigen  
Taehtien Sota  
Stjernekrigen  
Krieg Der Sterne  
La Guerra De Las Galaxias  
Guerra Nas Estrelas  
Guerre Stellari  
La Guerre Des Etoiles

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## Trivia Quiz

So you think you know all there is to know about *Star Wars*? Try answering these questions, designed to stump even the sharpest fans. The questions start off easy, but get progressively harder. Test your knowledge. The answers can be found elsewhere in this issue.

1. What are the names of Luke's aunt and uncle?
2. What language did Luke's aunt want the new 'droids to speak?
3. Who did Greedo work for?
4. How many banthas did Luke see in the desert?
5. Who wouldn't they serve in the Mos Eisley cantina?
6. According to Han Solo, Princess Leia discovered something in the garbage masher. What?
7. What did Obi-Wan Kenobi and Luke do to raise money in Mos Eisley?
8. Princess Leia told Grand Moff Tarkin that the Rebel base was on what planet?
9. What was wrong with the 'droid that Luke and his uncle discarded in favor of R2-D2?
10. According to his uncle, what had Luke's father done during the Clone Wars?
11. Where was the Millennium Falcon berthed in Mos Eisley Space Port?
12. What kind of ship did Luke use when shooting Womp Rats in Beggar's Canyon?
13. Who piloted the Rebel Blockade Runner?
14. What are the Sandpeople's weapons called?
15. The Mos Eisley cantina was filled with disreputable characters. One of them tried to start a fight with Luke. In how many systems did he say he carried the Death Sentence?
16. How much did Obi-Wan Kenobi offer to pay Han Solo for transportation to Alderaan?
17. What was the new model of Landspeeder that had come out and lessened the value of Luke's Landspeeder?
18. While still on Tatooine, how far does Luke offer to take Obi-Wan Kenobi?
19. In order to rescue the Princess, Luke and Han Solo pretended to be Stormtroopers transferring Chewbacca from what other cell block?
20. According to Princess Leia, what was Grand Moff Tarkin holding?
21. According to C-3PO, at what does R2-D2 excel?
22. How fast will the Millennium Falcon go?
23. What was the number of the cell block in which they were holding Princess Leia?
24. While talking to Luke's uncle, what did C-3PO say was his first job?
25. How many different types of mechanical vehicles were in *Star Wars*? Name them.

We won't have a Trivia Quiz in every issue, but we'll try to do them as often as possible. If you've got a favorite *Star Wars* trivia question or two, write them on a postcard and send them to Trivia Quiz, c/o *Star Wars* Fan Club; PO Box 1000; Beverly Hills CA 90213.

Thanks for helping to compile this issue's Trivia Quiz go to Paula Sigman, Lynn Dal Santo, and Mick Garriss.

## Q & A

### Where can people learn how to do special effects?

Doing special effects for a film is a complicated task. It involves a tremendous amount of work in many different areas. One person doesn't do all the different types of effects. Generally, there will be many people working on the special effects of a film, each one specializing in one area. One person will make miniature versions of space ships and buildings, another will photograph them with special cameras and lenses, a third will work at preparing mattes and other optical effects, involving the combination of separate pieces of film.

The best advice I can give on learning how to do special effects, is to check with a good library for books on filmmaking. Richard Edlund, Special Effects Director of Photography on *Star Wars*, suggests two books in particular. *Technique of Special Effects Cinematography* by Raymond Fielding, and *Special Effects in Motion Pictures* produced by the Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers (SMPTe).

For information specifically on the special effects done for *Star Wars*, look up the July 1977 issue of *American Cinematographer*. Most of the issue is devoted to *Star Wars*.

### Where did George Lucas get the idea for the character of Chewbacca, and what did he have in mind?

"A Wookiee is a cross between a large bear, a dog, and a monkey. He's very friendly, until you get him riled," said George Lucas."

"I'm very fond of Wookiees. I have a Wookiee at home. Well, she's not quite as big as the Wookiee in *Star Wars*, but she's a Wookiee just the same."

"Actually, she's a dog, but she looks just like a Wookiee. She's a very big, furry dog. She looks like a panda bear, but not as big. Her name is Indiana. And a Wookiee has certain dog characteristics—a Wookiee is protective, a friend, and kind of cuddly."

How the term Wookiee was coined is an interesting story. It starts back with George Lucas's first feature film, *THX 1138*, and a disc jockey who was doing some voiceovers.

It seems that the disc jockey, while recording dialogue to be used as voiceovers, had improvised a line about having just run over a Wookiee in the street. "I asked him if he knew what he meant when he used the word Wookiee, and he told me that he had just made it up on the spot. But I liked it and used it in that film. I guess when I was trying to name this new creature, I thought it sounded like a good description of the creature I wanted."

And that's where George Lucas got the idea for Wookiees.

### How were the X-Wings at the Rebel base on the fourth moon of Yavin made to fly?

The X-Wings at the Rebel base had to be fullsize versions because the pilots, ground crews, and robots had to be shown with them. Because the anti-gravitational engines did not produce thrust as we are accustomed to jet engines doing, it was reasonable to have the ground crew near the

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ships during take offs and landings. It was up to Special Production and Mechanical Effects Director John Stears to make the ships fly.



The problem was that the structure of the sound stage's roof was not capable of carrying the full weight of an X-Wing and the rig from which the X-Wing was to be hung. The X-Wing alone weighed in at over five tons, with the rig adding another three-quarters of a ton to the final weight.

It was obvious to Stears that a crane would be needed to lift such a heavy load, but where to place such a crane became a problem. Because the X-Wing and the set were being filmed with several cameras simultaneously, each one from a different angle, there was no where to place the crane that wouldn't have it showing up in the picture.

Finally, it was decided to get a tower crane, capable of lifting seven tons from a distance of one hundred feet. The crane they got was called a Zealous and it stood one hundred and sixty feet high.

The crane was positioned outside of the sound stage, making the task of operating it very difficult. The operator, sitting outside the sound stage was unable to see what was going on inside the sound stage. This problem was solved by having another crane operator, familiar with the characteristics of this crane inside, relaying instructions to the operator by radio.

Credit must be given to these crane operators because throughout the entire shooting, not a single re-take was required due to an error on their part. The moves they had to make were complicated and had to be precise to within a fraction of an inch.

With the expertise of these crane operators, John Stears was able to lift and lower the X-Wing space craft and make them look like they were flying.

That's all the questions and answers for this issue. If you have any questions that you'd like to have answered, send them to Q & A: c/o Star Wars Fan Club; PO Box 1000; Beverly Hills CA 90213. We don't have room to answer all of the questions we receive, but we'll answer as many as we can.

The information provided in this column is not based on rumors or presumptions, but is garnered from the people actually involved in the making of *Star Wars*.

## Trivia Quiz Answers

1. Aunt Beru and Uncle Owen Lars
2. Bocce
3. Jabba the Hut
4. 2
5. "their kind", otherwise known as 'droids
6. An incredible smell
7. They sold Luke's Landspeeder
8. Dantooine
9. It had a bad motivator
10. Piloted a Space Freighter
11. Docking Bay 94
12. A T-16, also called a Skyhopper
13. Captain Antilles
14. Gaffie Sticks
15. 12
16. 2,000 in advance, and 15,000 after they'd arrived
17. The XP-38
18. To Anchorhead
19. 1138
20. Vader's leash
21. Causing trouble
22. .5 past light speed
23. AA23
24. Programming binary load-lifters.
25. 10 were shown, an eleventh was mentioned. Landspeeder, X-Wing, Y-Wing, TIE Fighter, Blockade Runner (the Princess's ship), Corellian Pirate Ship or Freighter (the Millennium Falcon), Sandcrawler, Stardestroyer, Escape (or Life) Pod, and the Death Star were shown. The T-16, or Skyhopper, was mentioned but never shown, though Luke was playing with a miniature version of it while he was cleaning R2-D2 and C-3PO.



**STAR WARS FAN CLUB**  
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